

# Behavioral Interviewing

## Advanced Section: Step #4 Developing Behavioral Questions for a Position

## Developing Behavioral Questions for the Position

- ◆ **Objectives:**
  - ◆ Explain the advantages of behavioral questions over other types of interview questions.
  - ◆ Define the basic components of a behavioral question.
  - ◆ Construct a behavioral question for a job element.
  - ◆ Explain how job simulations can be incorporated into behavioral interviews.

## Types of Interview Questions

1. Related to credentials: "What education have you had?"
2. Related to experience: "What did you do in your last job?"
3. Asking for opinions: "What are your strengths and weaknesses?"
4. Without a job-related purpose: "How do you feel about the state of the world?"
5. Related to job specific factors: "Give a specific example of how you handled a difficult person."

## Types of Interview Questions

- ◆ Behavioral questions fit into the last category.
- ◆ Behavioral questions:
  - ◆ Are job related
  - ◆ Use past performance as a predictor of the future
  - ◆ Have a higher predictive validity than other types of questions
  - ◆ Ensure fairness among and between candidates
  - ◆ Are reliable for most types of interviews

## Developing Behavioral Questions for the Position

- ◆ The first step in developing behavioral questions is a job analysis--refer to Advanced Section #1.
- ◆ Job specific knowledge, skills, abilities, attitudes, and experience (KSAAE) are the basis for each behavioral question.

## Developing Behavioral Questions for the Position

- ◆ The next step is to prepare two or three behavioral questions for each of the priority job elements.
- ◆ Questions that probe past performance--that bring forth specific examples of how a person has performed in specific areas.
- ◆ Questions that show whether a person is qualified for and will fit into an organization in a specific job.

## Developing Behavioral Questions for the Position

Behavioral questions are constructed to elicit three factors:

- ◆ A specific situation relative to a job element
- ◆ An action taken
- ◆ The result or outcome of the action.

Example:

Job element: Writing skills

Question: Describe a time when you used written communication to get an important point across. What was the outcome of your communication?

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## Developing Behavioral Questions for the Position

Each question should ask for "real life" examples:

Job element: Decision making ability.

Question: Tell of a time when you had to make a decision in a hurry and you lacked information. What did you do? What was the outcome?

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Start your questions with a phrase that asks for specificity:

## Developing Behavioral Questions for the Position

Give a specific example ...  
Tell about a time ...  
Describe an instance ...  
Provide an example ...



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## Developing Behavioral Questions for the Position

Next, bring in a statement that relates to a specific job element (KSAAE):

- ◆ Give a specific example of how you dealt with a difficult person ...
- ◆ Tell about a time when you had many work projects going at the same time ...
- ◆ Describe an instance when you handled a stressful situation ...

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## Developing Behavioral Questions for the Position

Next, expand the question to elicit actions:

- ◆ Give a specific example of how you dealt with a difficult person. What exactly did you do and say?
- ◆ Tell about a time when you had many work projects going at the same time. What steps did you take to get them all done?
- ◆ Describe an instance when you handled a stressful situation. What verbal and non-verbal communication techniques did you use?

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## Developing Behavioral Questions for the Position

Finally, finish the question or add a phrase that asks for outcomes:

- ◆ Give a specific example of how you dealt with a difficult person. What exactly did you do and say? What was their response?
- ◆ Tell about a time when you had many work projects going at the same time. What steps did you take to get them all done? What was the outcome?

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## Developing Behavioral Questions for the Position

Behavioral questions may include other phrases to elicit more detail:

- ◆ Who was involved in the situation?
- ◆ If you had to repeat your actions in a similar situation, would you do anything differently?
- ◆ What did you learn from this situation?
- ◆ How did others respond to your actions?
- ◆ How well do you think you did?

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## Developing Behavioral Questions for the Position

Sometimes behavioral questions are effective if phrased to elicit situations that didn't go right . . .

Question: Describe a situation where you were "in over your head." What made you realize you were in trouble? What did you do? What did this teach you about the boundaries of your role?"

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## Developing Behavioral Questions for the Position

Behavioral questions are also effective if phrased to ask for contrary evidence . . .

To ask for contrary evidence, first ask a question related to a job factor, for example, teamwork.

Question: Think of a time when you were instrumental in developing a team project. What was your role and what was the outcome?

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## Asking for Contrary Evidence

Then, ask another question eliciting contrary evidence . . .

Question: Think of a time when you were instrumental in developing a team project that didn't succeed. What was your role? Why do you think it didn't succeed?

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## Developing Behavioral Questions for the Position

Use these principles to develop two or three questions for each KSAAE you identified as important to the job.

Some questions may cover more than one KSAA. For example . . .

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## Developing Behavioral Questions for the Position

- ◆ Give an example of when you introduced a new idea. Why did you decide to do this, what steps did you take to implement the idea, how did others respond to the idea, and what was the outcome?
- ◆ This question can elicit information about assessing a need for change, initiative, creativity, ability to make change, and skill in influencing others.

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## Developing Behavioral Questions for the Position

- ◆ Following are generic job elements with questions to illustrate the principles of good behavioral questions.



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## Examples of Behavioral Questions

### Job Element: Teamwork

Question: Describe a situation where others working with you disagreed with your ideas. What did you do? What was the outcome? What did you learn from this experience?

### Job Element: Application of Knowledge

Question: Give an example of when you used your training in (area of knowledge) to a work situation. Was there a change or result? What would you do differently if you had to do it again?

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## Examples of Behavioral Questions

### Job Element: Work Standards

Question: Describe a time when you were not satisfied with your work performance. What did you consider the reason? What did you do about it? What did you learn?

### Job Element: Communication

Question: Tell of a time when something you said was not understood in the manner you meant. How did you interpret the miscommunication? What did you do about the situation and what was the outcome?

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## Examples of Behavioral Questions

### Job Element: Organization

Question: Give examples of how you determine priorities on a busy workday.

Question: Give an example of a time when you made a bad decision about what should be a priority in your workday.

### Job Element: Customer Service

Question: Tell of the most difficult customer service situation you ever had to handle. Tell what you did and said and what was the outcome?

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## Examples of Behavioral Questions

### Job Element: Working with Supervisors

Question: Tell about your experience with the best supervisor you ever had. What made them the best?

### Job Element: Working with Supervisors

Question: Give an example of the most difficult situation you ever faced in getting along with a supervisor. What was the outcome?

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## Developing Behavioral Questions for Other Job-Related Factors

- ◆ After you have developed questions for the critical KSAs, develop two to three questions for other job-related factors--factors such as:

- ◆ Shift work
- ◆ Willingness to travel
- ◆ Answering the telephone all day
- ◆ Working weekends
- ◆ Working alone or in small groups

Refer to advanced section #1

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- ◆ Job-related factors are very important in matching an individual to an organization.
- ◆ Job-related factors identify the environment and conditions in which the KSAAEs will be used:
  - ◆ work demands
  - ◆ work space
  - ◆ staffing fluctuations
  - ◆ available support
  - ◆ high/low stress
  - ◆ repetitive tasks
  - ◆ customer characteristics (elderly, dying, critically ill, disfigured, mostly male)

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- ◆ Even with the required KSAAEs, a candidate may not be willing or able to work within required work conditions or demands.
- ◆ A mismatch can lead to poor performance, high turnover, and low job morale.



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## Developing Behavioral Questions for Job-Related Factors

Lead into each question with a statement about the environmental or work condition you want to emphasize.

- ◆ The (area) is a high stress environment . . .
- ◆ This job requires occasional overtime . . .
- ◆ The office you will be assigned to receives about 50 calls a day . . .

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## Developing Behavioral Questions for Job-Related Factors

Then, add a behavioral question.

- ◆ The emergency room is a high-stress environment. Tell us your experience in working in a stressful environment. How did you handle the stress? How did you know when you reached a point of overload? What did you do at this point?

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## Developing Behavioral Questions for Job-Related Factors

- ◆ This job requires occasional overtime. Tell us about a specific time when you had to work a significant amount of overtime. How did you cope with that added burden?
- ◆ The office you will be assigned to receives about 50 calls a day. Give examples to show how you get work done with frequent interruptions.

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## Work Simulation Exercises

- ◆ Finally, consider work simulation exercises as a part of the interview--exercises that closely resemble the actual work activities.
  - ◆ Dealing with difficult people
  - ◆ Prioritizing tasks
  - ◆ Writing a care plan for a patient
  - ◆ Making a presentation
  - ◆ Working through a case study and interpreting clinical information

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## Work Simulation Exercises

- ◆ **Advantages:**
  - ◆ Can create similar work environments, stresses, settings in which KSAAEs will be used.
  - ◆ Observe performance under real (simulated) work conditions
  - ◆ Can be designed to evaluate several KSAAEs at a time.
  - ◆ Can compare how all candidates react to the same situation.

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## Work Simulation Exercises

- ◆ **First identify a KSAAE appropriate for an interview simulation.**
  - ◆ Counseling skills
  - ◆ Dealing with an irate customer
  - ◆ Problem solving
  - ◆ Analyzing information
  - ◆ Instructing or training

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## Work Simulation Exercises

Next, design a simulation which will test a priority KSAAE and resemble the real work setting.



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## Work Simulation Exercises

**Job element: Counseling Skills**

**Simulation:** Mr. Jones has been late for work six times within the past three weeks. He has also been seen leaving early on several occasions.

I will play the role of Mr. Jones and you are his supervisor. Role play a meeting in which you counsel him on his work habits.

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## Work Simulation Exercises

- ◆ **Next, plan what role you will play as Mr. Jones. Plan a role that will test counseling skills:**
  - ◆ Non-attentive?
  - ◆ Angry?
  - ◆ Nonchalant?
  - ◆ Sarcastic?



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## Work Simulation Exercises

By testing each applicant's skills with this situation, you can observe and compare how each performs in a simulated situation.

This will allow you to know, not guess, about skill level.

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## Work Simulation Exercises

- ◆ Design other types of simulations.
- ◆ For clinical positions, build a case study around a patient. Include challenges specific to the job.
  - ◆ Interpret patient signs and symptoms
  - ◆ Interpret lab data
  - ◆ Read EKGs
  - ◆ Determine appropriate diagnostic workups

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## Work Simulation Exercises

- ◆ Follow up by asking applicants to write a progress note of the situation. Ask them to include a treatment plan for the patient.

With the simulation you can evaluate:

- ◆ Clinical knowledge and skill
- ◆ Writing skills

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## Work Simulation Exercises

- ◆ Follow up again by asking them to role play and explain their findings and educate the patient. You play the patient.

Now, with the simulation you can evaluate:

- ◆ Clinical knowledge and skill
- ◆ Writing skills
- ◆ IPR skills
- ◆ Patient education skills

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## Work Simulation Exercises

- ◆ Job element: Ability to prioritize work

Simulation: Make a list of daily work duties for the job. Add two or three unforeseen events that require applicants to make decisions about priority. Have applicants rank order and explain how they would accomplish the work for that day.

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## Work Simulation Exercises

- ◆ Incorporate two to three job simulations into your interview tool.
- ◆ This will allow you to recreate the work situation very closely and observe performance.
- ◆ This will enhance your predictive ability.

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**Through the use of behavioral questions and simulations, you can achieve a high score in selecting quality employees for your area and organization!!!!**